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THE POLITICS OF MEMORY IN CROATIAN SOCIALIST CULTURE: SOME REMARKS

In this paper the author examines the key role of the mass media and popular culture in the change of memory practices in the socialist memory culture of World War II. Rather than answers, the paper offers guidelines for the understanding of the place of the Yugoslav popular culture as a central place for the perpetuation of ideological patterns of historical memory. The dispersion of power in late socialism as well as the coming of age of generations with no first--hand memory of the Second World War resulted in finding more artistically demanding and more media-conscious ways of attracting audiences. On the other hand, the author takes historiographic genres of elite culture to be "agents" of ideological homogenization and cultural regression, which reached its peak in the late 1980s, promoting a politics of memory according to the model of the "Balkan Holocaust".

Keywords: socialist culture of memory, popular culture, World War II, Croatia

> On both sides of the Atlantic, national commemorations were largely the preserve of elite males, the designated carriers of progress, who, as a consequence of newly defined gender divisions, felt the past to be slipping away from them much faster than did women. The new imperatives of individualism set men on a fast track, producing among them a profound sense of losing touch with the past. Thought of as belonging more to the past, women came to serve in various (and usually unpaid) ways as the keepers and embodiments of memory. They provided consolation to men terrified that they had become rootless as a result of their own upward and outward mobility. (…) Workers, racial minorities, young people, and women, gained admission to national memories at an even slower pace than they were admitted to national representatives and educational institutions (Gillis 1994:10).

The remark by John R. Gillis, the editor of the influential volume *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (1994), concerning the cultural need of elite males for commemorative rituals in America and

Europe at a time when the imperatives of individualism, mobility and modernism in general produce in them a sense of losing touch with the past and their ancestors, also holds for socialist Croatia. The problematic relation of the sons of the revolution to tradition is evident in the antagonism between the communist radical way of looking towards the future and the need to ideologically mobilize the masses through invented and transformed rituals, so as to establish social cohesion and the authority of the new regime.[1] Every ritual, including the commemorative ritual, is based on the experience of traditional customs and norms, which, as "a given set of practices", infuse it "with a sacramental quality" (Giddens 1990:105). The Croatian experience of contemporary history is even more accurately reflected by Gillis' claim that women – as the keepers and embodiments of a plural experiential memory – are "opponents" of official history, the bearers of that offensive *memory surplus* which cannot be subsumed under the authorized systems of knowledge. This surplus resisted the ideological matrix of selective memory and oblivion and the "humane pathos" promoted by the socialist commemorative rituals, whose aim was to invoke in their participants the feelings of reverence, idealism and pride for their heroic past. The direct and intimate nature of mediating memory from mother to children – especially if enveloped in secrecy and suppression – is the reason why particular characteristics of memory are comparable to a religious feeling. Namely, both of them form a constitutive part of identity that leads to a particular type of moral certainty, and is a departure from the requirement of objectivity and impartiality. Therefore, memory is frequently seen as non-historical and anti-historical, because it reduces the ambiguity of the past, and the stories about it appear in the guise of moral lessons. In fact, every narrative that claims the absolute right to the truth and starts with an authoritative *I remember*, as stated by Ilana R. Bel-Et, in general ends with a moral imperative for the descendants: *Remember!* (2002:206).[2]

There are numerous opposing opinions as to why memory becomes a social obsession and a constitutive part of the identity search at a time when *communicational memory* – i.e., direct interaction of the members of different generations – is replaced by *cultural memory*; that is to say at a time when memory appears "to be losing [its] salience, [its] unproblematic presence and importance for everyday life" (Müller 2002:15). The British historian Jan-Werner Müller (2002) believes that a positive evaluation of

[1] The art historian Boris Groys believes that communist societies were repressive but simultaneously completely modern, with their own globalization project: "If the postcolonial subject moves from the past into the present, the post-communist subject strides into the present from the future. Communism is, thus, merely a radical manifestation of a militant modernism, a faith in progress, a manifestation of a dream about an enlightened and active *avant garde* and an unshakeable faith in the future" (2003:181).

[2] "Large chunks of verbal agony, beginning with the words 'I remember', and ending with a sharp admonition: Remember!" (Bet-El 2002:206).

particular memories happens for two reasons: because of a resistance to the utopia of globalization and because of a neoconservative impulse of "cultural compensation" for social and psychological dislocation caused by the "second" or "reflexive modernization", as it is described by the sociologists Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens. Giddens (1990) believes that it is as late as the 1960s that there is a break in a four-century coexistence of the spirits of tradition and modernity, whose chief characteristic is reflexivity: "social reflexivity means the interrogation and undermining of tradition" (1990:152). The general belief is that the practices of memorisation and musealisation stimulate sentimentality, self--content or self-pity rather than a reflexive, critical or active relation to the past.

For the argumentation of this paper it is significant that there is no consensus as to the way in which the electronic age has caused a change in the mnemonic techniques (which is comparable to the end of the oral memory tradition after the discovery of the press), as to the way in which the mass media invigorate the interest for the past, whether they lead to a documentarist or a fictional impression of it, to which extent the media cause a "secondary orality", whether they emphasize the idea of difference or sameness of the past and the current experience of history, whether they are interested in the symbolism or the suppressed voices of women through history.[3] Furthermore, it is not at all obvious whether the media have supported a "shift from a heroic to a 'factual' or an anti-heroic style", which is, according to Peter Burke (2001:149), along with the interest in the position of the victim, another characteristic of the modern western historical discourse. Dominick LaCapra, an American historian who has extensively studied the relationship between the collective trauma and the historical discourse, believes that the very idea of *politics of memory* is a reflection of social and academic realism which negates the significance of traumatic disorientation of people, and sees the past only as a strategic pawn in the modern manoeuvres of interest groups and the competitive victimology:

> Such realism eschews traumatic after effects and the role of psychic (including imaginary or phantasmatic) aspects of ideology as well as the need to link understanding of such aspects to necessary modes of social, political, and economic analysis (LaCapra 2001:217).

LaCapra believes that the analytical power of historical and social sciences has failed because of its very impossibility to explain how and why

[3] I would like to point to the fact that a community of women is an imagined community, just like the national and class communities; and just like there are no separate women's worlds, there are also no permanent or essential characteristics of women's memory, women's experience or women's writing about this experience. Every experience is shaped and acquires its meaning in certain historical circumstances and within certain ideological frames, and therefore in the memory of it ideological changes and social identifications play as significant a role as gender.

"historical excesses" – such as genocide – with a long-term posttraumatic effect can in no way be overcome by any politics of memory, oblivion or dispensing justice in the name of those who survived nor can they be explained by a net of social, political and economic factors.

The archivization of women's history: from 1945 to the 1950s

I will attempt to identify the salient features of the first phase of memory culture after World War II in Croatia, which lasted, in my opinion, until the mid 1950s. In this period, social life was primarily characterized by a domination of military and veteran culture, which considered keeping the memory of the National Liberation War its ethical mission, unaffected by the challenges of the current political situation. It was a politics of memory that militarised and masculinised history, glorified acts of physical heroism, worshipped the cult of the president-marshal, and eliminated "undesirable elements" from the collective memory. Thus, there were no significant difficulties for the new cultural production to continue with the epic rhetoric about the previous horrifying wars and famous battles against "foreign conquerors" (cf. Žanić 1998). In fact, the greater difficulty was to invent the rhetoric and symbolism which could represent the women's contribution to the partisan movement, which was, as it had often been said, "unprecedented in the world's history" (cf. Senjković 2003, Jambrešić Kirin 2003). Whether women were depicted as silent victims of terror or as brave Communists who would shout slogans facing a firing squad, the first phase of memory culture of the post-war period was characterized by mediated voices of women who entered the partisan legend as dead heroines. Tacit (self)-censorship of any different, ideologically objectionable and potentially compromising experience is particularly obvious in the example of surviving female prisoners who returned from concentration and labour camps in Germany. Their testimonies have never been recorded by anyone because of a prevailing opinion that forced labour presented some kind of unintentional collaboration or dishonourable survival.[4] This vow of silence and idolatry for the dead was poetically expressed in the following description of the war heroine Nada Dimić: "And while her red maiden lips were sealed forever, her dress continued telling a history of the one who wore it" (Crnobori-Oprijan 1957:43). However, the dress did not gain a status of a piece of memorabilia, but was soon exchanged for a mythic armour of an Amazon (like in the famous speech of Vladimir Nazor, a poet and the first Speaker

[4] Their testimonies have been systematically collected for the first time only after the year 2000 by Anna Maria Grünfelder, who collected testimonies of those who had the right to claim for reparation payments from the Austrian National Fund for Victims of Nazi Persecution (cf. Grünfelder 2004).

of the Croatian Parliament) and by the stylised dresses of the French Marianne and the Egyptian goddess of fertility.[5]

The collective project of representing women's war history in the public was managed by the organization called AFŽ – *Antifašistički front žena* (The Anti-Fascist Front of Women) later renamed *Savez ženskih društava* (The Union of Women's Association). Its editorial policy was dominated by the archive principles of collecting, classifying and distributing published documents in the public. Archiving as a legitimate historiographic method offered the possibility of arranging the contingent and dissonant content connected with women's war history into familiar and clear "boxes". As noted by Derrida, every archiving simultaneously functions so as to establish and conserve, it is revolutionary and traditional at the same time. The archive is not just a place to store and keep valuable content of *the past* which would exist independently of it:

> No, the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the archivable content even in its very coming into existence and its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event. This is also our political experience of the so-called news media (Derrida 1998:17).

A prime example of such diligent collecting of documents and their presentation in chronological order according to region are the two volumes of the book *Hrvatske žene u narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi* (Croatian Women in the National Liberation Struggle 1955), which numbers 1043 pages, and whose editor in chief was Marija Šoljan.[6] Since documents were considered to "speak for themselves", the only comments were short references to certain people and events, contained in footnotes and captions. In the introduction Šoljan says that supplementing the documents and checking the accuracy of dating and locating them, e.g. the people in the photographs, was the main objective of the publication:

> After three years of work, the editors bring these documents and this data to the eyes of the public. Several hundred activists of the Anti--Fascist Front of Women have taken part in collecting, choosing and

[5] There is a drawing of a partisan woman from the cover of the first issue of the bulletin of the AFŽ – *Žena u borbi* (Woman in the liberation struggle) which was published in July 1943. The drawing, chosen by Marija Šoljan, depicts a partisan version of Marianne – a bare-footed woman who holds a little girl high in one hand and a gun in the other, her hair flying freely, her shoulders bare, and wearing a dress borrowed from Marianne. There is another interesting drawing which adorned one of the four huge billboards completely covering the monument to Ban Jelačić on July 21 1945, on the occasion of a large gathering of women on Zagreb's central square before the first congress of the Croatian branch of the AFŽ. This drawing depicts a young woman with a sheaf of wheat whose dress and hair style reminds of the Egyptian frescoes (cf. Šoljan 1955, Vol. 1:69).

[6] It should be pointed out that M. Šoljan was assigned this responsible task because she was a prominent activist of the AFŽ, but also because she was the wife of a leading Croatian communist and a high ranking official in the new government, Vladimir Bakarić.

> checking the documents and data. (…) However, the editors would like to stress that they do not consider this publication the end of collecting documents and data about the activities of the Anti-Fascist Front of Women during the National Liberation Struggle. On the contrary: this work is published so as to include even more women in the systematisation and transparent cooperation in supplementing the material and possibly its correction (1955:ii).

Archiving was the first, and most frequently the last phase of work on the documents of a period, which were then left for future generations to deal with. The feminist historian Lydia Sklevicky (1989) was the most distinguished researcher to examine how it was possible to dismantle the AFŽ in 1953 with so little opposition. The main reason she mentions is that the AFŽ remained a highly fluid movement and an association that never had an official constitution, an official programme, a statute, or a set of rules to lend it legitimacy.

The strategy of supplementing two discourses – mythical ethnic stories about a struggle of good and evil and a new socialist humanist discourse about freedom and the triumph of justice over force – was clearly explained by the Sarajevo philosopher Ugo Vlaisavljević. For him these discourses converge on the unawareness of the inhuman, on the inability to speak about brute force and violence which is "'patched up' by endless phantasmatic content". The continuing common obsession with the inhuman is resolved because the modern political discourse resorts to clichés of the premodern epic code in which the enemy figures as a phantom, an evil doer, a monster, a demon, and, very importantly, a beast and an animal (cf. Jambrešić Kirin 2004). The Germans and their collaborators were not only represented in the post-war popular production as violators of the rules of war, they were non-humans, steeped in crime, and that is why "unrelenting struggle to the very end using all available means and their extermination was the only way to victory" (Vlaisavljević 2003:70). Suppressed and denied, participation in the crime is the main reason why the victorious ideology was never able to separate the story of its birth out of the will of the people and their humane aspirations for a society of justice and equality from the story about a ruthless four-year struggle with the enemy in order to survive:

> The entire epic quality of the National Liberation War, which applies to the best part of post-war literature, describes not merely the war but the great event of the communist revolution and recounts the struggle of *humans* and *non-humans*. This is why the victorious ideological discourse was never able to describe the fundamental event of its genealogy using its own terms. (…) In fact, this modern political world of ideas was grafted on to the primary and ancient *ethnic layer*. The eternal struggle of religious plays and ancient pagan narratives was deconstructed only in form: it was translated into the humanist discourse and its obsession with the inhumane" (Vlaisavljević 2003:71).

The mass media and the cultural forms of memory

It is my intention to point out that the mass media in the socialist politics of memory – contrary to the opinion of most western theoreticians and historians of the Balkans (Glenny 1993; Thompson 1999; Hoepkin 2000; Bet-El 2002; etc.) – played a far more complex, "shifting and transient" role than merely as a means of indoctrination and ideological censorship which, allegedly, erased the problematisation of interethnic conflicts from documentary as well as artistic representation of the war. The second important fact for my argumentation is that the revolutionary and war history for the generations born after 1945 could not contribute "to ontological security in so far as it sustains trust in the continuity of past, present, and future, and connects such trust to routinised social practices" (Giddens 1990:105). Therefore the role of the media – newspapers, cartoons, film, television – as dominant cultural forms with the help of which the past and the recent reality is reworked and represented was not to impose an image of the past "as it should have occurred"[7] but to offer a construction of history "as it could be imagined" in codes of popular culture. With the help of state-financed film projects, the static monumental and formulaic nature of the "partisan epic" was transformed into symbolic codes of the new time, into a register of popular culture which included oral history, American westerns, action films and the first TV-novels (cf. Ranković 1977; Golubović 1977). It is difficult to estimate the extent to which the filmed historical stories contributed to the relativisation, typisation and stylisation of the past reality, but it is certain that they created suggestive images which were imposed by the educational system and the media until they had become part and parcel of the cultural and social memory of a period. It is considered that since the 1960s on, the power of the mass media no longer resides in the information they provide, but in the fact that "imagination has… acquired a singular new power in social life" and it is the media that generate "new images and scenarios for life possibilities" (Appadurai 1991:198) which control the experience of the present as well as the past. On the other hand, as it is continually being pointed out by cultural studies theorists, the role of the film and television in contemporary culture cannot be understood by exploring how the broadcasted content is censored, controlled and distributed, but rather by recognizing the unpredictability of their receptive effects – the "instability and multiplicity" of their "meanings and pleasures".[8]

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[7] "In this sense, the past was destroyed and, at the same time, replaced by a 'how-it-should--have-occurred' construction of history. Socialism, therefore, did more than simply deny or negate history; in fact, socialist discourses about past may be regarded as processes of 'historicization', though the 'historicization' in question was of a distinctly teleological sort" (Giordano 1996:103).

[8] "In the cultural economy, however, TV is entirely different. It is decentred, diffuse, located in the multiplicity of its modes and moments of reception. TV is the plurality of

Studying the "production of memory" in France after World War I, Daniel J. Sherman noticed that cultural forms in which memory practice is mediated are largely autonomous in relation to the social frame and the ideological formulations:

> In most of these productions [literature, film, popular visual imagery – – R. J. K.], formal traditions and received assumptions enjoy considerable autonomy from larger social structures and processes such as capitalism, technology, and ideological formulations like the national-local dichotomy. The role of these larger structures might best be understood as a kind of mediation: by mapping the terrain in which commemoration operates, molding what Raymond Williams calls 'the conditions of a practice', they mediate both the experience and the representation of memory (1994:187).

A respected cultural studies theorist, John Fiske, similarly points out that theories of ideology cannot explain the great cultural diversity among the subordinate classes which experience the same social system in completely different ways – "accommodating themselves with, or opposing themselves to, the dominant value system in a variety of ways" (1987). But the most important fact is that, both in democratic and autocratic societies, the principal force of homogenization of subcultural groups is the very experience of "marginalised and repressed histories".[9]

In accordance with the tenets of Maurice Halbwachs' historical sociology of memory (1992[1941]) it is important to mention that our experience of the past is moulded by mental images which we activate in order to solve current problems, so collective memory is in fact a reconstruction of the past in light of the present. However, just as the memory of past events is not a sequence of unconnected frames whose selection is controlled exclusively by the interest of the present moment, the partisan film is not an autonomous reservoir of genre-structured images with no grounding in the experiential and generational memory. Thus, it is likely that while some people find pure entertainment in partisan films and TV series, they could inspire personal recollections in others.

Nevertheless, the struggle to actualize the revolutionary and war issues in the Yugoslav filmology discourse is stressed as more important than a historiographic authenticity of the war film:

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its reading practices, the democracy of its pleasures and it can only be understood in its fragments. It promotes and provokes a network of resistances to its own power whose attempt to homogenise and hegemonise breaks down on the instability and multiplicity of its meanings and pleasures" (Fiske 1987).

[9] "The autonomy of these groups [the people, consumers] from the dominant is only relative, and never total, but it derives from their marginalised and repressed histories that have intransigently resisted incorporation, and have retained material, as well as ideological, differences. (…) For a cultural commodity to be popular then, it must be able to meet the various interests of the people amongst whom it is popular as well as the interests of its producers" (Fiske 1987).

> Our film about the war and the revolution cannot be a costume historical film… but rather a film whose characters we can recognize in our everyday life. They speak our language; they raise and resolve the problems and dilemmas of this society and this historical period (Golubović 1977:50).

It is true that the official version of the memory of the Second World War in the Yugoslav society did not reflect plurality or represent "individual mass personal memory" (Müller 2002:20), nor did it attempt to integrate them. It promoted the memories of "strong historical subjects" who endorsed the political regime, the ideology of fraternity and unity and the legitimacy of the party in power, and repressed the motifs of interethnic conflict and sexual violence in the war. The key issue is the extent to which the partisan film, television and journal reports about partisan destinies, partisan moral, war romance and crimes formed a single symbolic value system which could harmonize the meanings of numerous personal war memories. As many oral history studies in Great Britain, the Unites States and Australia have shown, the participants of the war themselves are prone to changing personal memories, harmonizing them with the popular culture representations (Thomson et al. 1994:42). The ability to visualize past events in people who have no first-hand experience almost exclusively depends on the cultural forms which "create conditions of possibility". Therefore it is not uncommon for most people to imagine the First World War in black and white, and for the imagery of the Second World War to necessarily incorporate the landing in Normandy, the siege of Stalingrad, the Pacific naval battles, and, recently, concentration camp images of the Holocaust.

Atomization and sentimentalization of war memories in the 1960s and the 1970s

> The atomization of a general memory into a private one has given the obligation to remember a power of international coercion. It gives everyone the necessity to remember and to protect the trappings of identity; when memory is no longer everywhere, it will not be anywhere unless one takes the responsibility to recapture it through individual means (Nora 1989:16).

Two phenomena will be mentioned as examples of opposing tendencies in the second phase of my hypothetical chronology of Croatian memory culture. These phenomena contribute to the same spirit of the times, but with a different, unexplored, and, in fact, contingent effects on the identity of citizens in the grip of the future oriented "communist modernism" with a gradual establishment of a consumer society and the increasingly vigorous contacts with Western Europe. Although the undeniable differences in the social habitus of the recipients of cultural goods in the democratic societies of the West and the socialist Yugoslavia require

thorough interdisciplinary research, I would venture the claim that in both contexts it was popular culture that was the central place of the perpetuation of ideological patterns of historical memory. Popular culture was striving to adapt to ever more intense sociological and economic changes and the fragmentation of social experiences, at the same time trying to maintain the authority of the community foundation stories. The lack of historical legitimacy accompanied by "white spots" in increasingly *etnicised* collective war memories was solved by Yugoslav elites by new investments: planned construction of large memorials and thematic memorial parks dedicated to the glorious revolutionary battles. The impersonality and typified nature of the partisan myth – which is evident in the non-figurativeness of monuments – was accompanied by localisation and personalisation through exhaustive war casualty lists from a particular region, and through the erection of smaller figurative monuments on the citizen's initiative.

On the other hand, tacit women's memories find their way to the public through reportage on the long process of female grieving over the unknown destinies of their children, who were taken from them by force upon coming to Ustasha camps. The campaign initiated by the Zagreb weekly *Arena* started in 1963 and lasted, with short interruptions, more than ten years. Its aim was to include the readers in the country and abroad in finding and bringing together family members separated during the war. I believe that the *Arena's* section entitled *Arena traži vaše najmilije* (Arena's search for your loved ones) is a significant example of women's memory practice which is controlled by two plots – the one oriented towards the dark history of victimised ethnic community and the other oriented towards the optimistic future of family reunion. From a marginal phenomenon of a newspaper presentation of a particular memory – – predominantly by people from the Kozara region of northern Bosnia – – this popular section grew into an "exhaust valve" of one of the numerous collective war traumas, whose symptoms escalated in the public space of the 1980s.

While in the case of the male memorisation practice through monument symbolisation and commemoration certain parallels can be drawn to similar ceremonies "on both sides of the Atlantic", *Arena's* case of atomisation, sentimentalisation and narrativisation of the war camp experiences of women differs from the western interest for the Holocaust, which gets its name during the 1960s (Koonz 1994:259). The most important difference is that women's memories of the Holocaust do not become "cover stories" of western popular and scientific publications until the 1970s and the 1980s (Bernard 2000), while the Yugoslav official politics of memory, in my opinion, from the very beginning assigned the ethical issues of survival in camp conditions to the female domain out of mainstream history. Admittedly, this domain was characterized by a lack of awareness about the importance of the female historical experience, but it was also devoid of media romanticising and analytical glorification of

the survival strategies which "implies a female innocence and a certain type of a deep, inner virtue" (Bernard 2000) typical of the first writings on the Holocaust. While in the latter writings the transmission of the traumatic experience onto the second generation of survivors plays a significant part (Koonz 1994; Bernard 2000; LaCapra 2001), the pages of *Arena* foreground the existential angst of a *secondary witness* with a construed identity, and, paradoxically, with almost no personal memory of the war period, because in most cases they were children of a young age who did not remember their parents or their own names.

It is significant that an illustrated magazine on the verge of yellow press, which generated interest in its audience by sensational stories about crimes of passion, tragedies of poor and seriously ill children and confessions of criminals, did not emphasize the chronology of the crime or the tragic potential of "impossible" moral dilemmas similar to those in A. Pakula's film "Sophia's choice" (1982). This speaks to the fact that the journalists and editors, led by an unerring intuition and self-censorship which was directed by the "political correctness" of the Yugoslav memory culture, were very careful not to cross the thin line separating consternation and fascination with the crime, a sensationalist and a serious approach to this significant social topic with enormous traumatic potential.[10] The key to the popularity of this section was the openness, inconclusiveness of the story and the events. A happy outcome was as much a matter of chance as of the amount of information available and the detective persistence of the people who were involved in other people's biographies in various ways.

As opposed to a dominant style of representing and invoking genocide which will follow two decades later (cf. MacDonald 2002:98--220), during the decisive moment of social modernisation in the 1960s the passive principle of identification with the victims of tragic events was not considered relevant, but, rather, an active principle of reconstruction or, in dire need, of "inventing" biographies of those who escaped a tragic destiny.[11] Instead of the later necrophilic unions with the dead based on ethnicity, *Arena's* project of family reunion promoted solidarity, understanding and faith in the common action of "constables of goodness" regardless of their ethnicity, and an active individual exploration of the past. In the dominant, visual part of the narrative, there were predominantly photographs of women in poses of melancholic sorrow or

[10] We learn only from passing remarks that some mothers, because young children were regularly taken upon coming to the camps in Stara Gradiška, Jasenovac or Sisak, decided to save their small children by entrusting them to unknown people along the way, and that some mothers were killed because they did not want to be separated from their children.

[11] The project brought to light the existence of people who knew nothing about their descent, home region or ethnicity, and who were very successful members of the new society. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that speaking about the cases of changing – or "inventing" identities of war orphans, which included changing ethnicity – was a taboo, a dead end of this discourse.

euphoria because of a final return of a lost son/daughter" into the "childhood backyard".[12] Old and recent family photographs were represented, in accordance with the spirit of the times, as "films of events", i.e. the exciting and sentimental sequences of investigation. The domestic version of Gillis' theoretical narration about women who "provided consolation to men terrified that they had become rootless as a result of their own upward and outward mobility" (1994:10) has two important additions. Firstly, it comes across as a story about a concealed conflict between the town and the country, between an urban and a rural matrix of giving precedence to a personal or a collective identity. Secondly, the gender symbolisation of mobility through the male principle and rootedness through the female principle is less pronounced than the generational difference in expressing local patriotism (the war generation) or tolerating alienation as a by-product of the modernisational progress (the post-war generation).[13] Although the elegiac tone of the intriguing story about the return to the "childhood backyard" owes much to the tradition of oral stories and fairy tales – e.g. the importance of scars and permanent marks on the body which are crucial for identification – none of the recognized heroes mentions a possible return to the country, to the idyllic childhood spaces, but mentions only their happiness for having "patched up" their identity gaps.[14]

History lesson: from a bard to a film spectacle

Two decades after the war the documents no longer speak for themselves, captions are often left out and the culture animators mention the need of an "evocative" revival of places of memory of the great events of the revolution. They would be the first to agree with Paul Connerton's statement that "if there is such a thing as social memory (...) we are likely to find it in commemorative ceremonies; but commemorative ceremonies prove to be commemorative only in so far as they are performative…" (1989:5). In that sense, based on their repetitive and performative

[12] The titles of *Arena's* stories also show this: "A biography found: a young man now knows where he was born and who his mother is" (1968, no. 369, p. 8); "Ljuban's return" (1968, no. 371, p. 8); "A returned childhood" (1968, no. 396, p. 15).

[13] However it is a fact that the section *Telegrami* (*Telegrams*) which was an occasional addition to the section *Arena's search for your loved ones*, contains a growing number of letters from women seeking help for contacting their husbands working abroad who have suddenly broken off all contact with their home.

[14] The fondness for fairy-tale motifs and summarizing in the newspaper presentation of the personal stories of the "lost children" is evident in this heading: *Evening fairy tales: of the mother who was left crying on a railway station, of the father, Milan, who was a forestry worker and of a boy who looked like his brother* (*Arena*, 1969, no. 401, p. 25). It is also evident in this statement given by Rajka Popović: "Ever since the moment I set out for Gojčin, my home village, I felt like in a dream, a fairy tale (…) and now that I am with my family again, I now believe that even the most beautiful fairy tale cannot be more beautiful than what I have experienced" (*Arena*, 1969, no. 396, p. 15).

character while confirming the non-ethnic Yugoslav identity, commemorative ceremonies were not substantially different from other "empty" socialist rituals – the celebration of Tito's birthday, the First of May parades and the observances of the Day of the Republic. Their role in political symbolism was marginal until the late 1980s accompanying the collapse of the Communist Party rule when a cult of dead bodies has "taken on a political life… revising the past and reorienting the present" (Verdery 1999:125). However, two conflicting tendencies coexisted in the post-revolutionary social order: the effort to homogenize the ethnically and socially dispersed society through its own "revolutionary tradition" and a wish to transform that tradition accommodating for the needs and preferences of the new generation. Thus, it is no wonder that the Yugoslav animators of memory culture strenuously work at connecting commemorative, educational, recreational, sports and entertainment content in places that used to evoke only reverence and awe of the surviving fellows combatants. Long-term construction of large monuments and memorial parks regularly accompanied by youth centres begins in the mid 1960s. These include memorial parks such as: Kumrovec memorial park (1963-1978), Petrova gora memorial park (1966), Kozara national park and memorial complex (1972), Trnavac (Museum of the first female partisan battalion), Tjentište – the valley of heroes (1968-1974), and the Jasenovac memorial (1968) which is the only one with an exclusively commemorative function.[15]

The idea behind these monumental projects was for them to become "much more than conventional 'historical areas'"; based on celebrations and rituals that were meant to revive the heroic spirit which would not be captured in photographs of the past or in the "stereotyped scientific norms" (Plenča 1974:67).[16] A series of tourist guide booklets entitled *Spomenici revolucije* (The monuments of the revolution) was awarded a socialist decoration because it was recognized as a commendable attempt to transform the symbolic value of the fetishized experience into a cultural asset of the present moment. In order to *animate* the spirit of the past new technological devices were used. Moreover, the performative authority of the national hero as the epic bard who gives a "great history lesson" to the gathered many at the historical site was replaced by a film canvas and film

[15] Information about the present state of the museum collections and the monuments in these Croatian locations can be found on the web site of the Croatian museum--documentation center (www.mdc.hr).

[16] Dušan Plenča, the author of the booklet about the memorial complex "Tjentište – the valley of heroes" near the Sutjeska River (1974), who is also the developer of the idea of the complex, starts from the point that "only art can enable a person to stir his feelings and to turn these feelings into sensory and willing action" (1974:67). He deserves credit for the fact that apart from monumental frescos by Krsto Hegedušić, the memorial in Tjentište also contains "audio-visual robots with historical slides, grouped into 12 topics, and with records, cassettes, and tapes of evocative music, recitals, films and dramatic stories (…) and it should be pointed out that the national park is building up its own reference film collection" (1974:86-87).

spectacles dealing with famous battles, such as *Kozara* (1961), *Bitka na Neretvi* (The Battle of Neretva; 1969), *Sutjeska* (1973). This is the opinion shared by Špela Rozin, a young Slovenian actress who played the role of the partisan woman Vesna in the film "The Battle of Neretva", in an interview for the magazine *Arena* in 1969:

> When *The Battle of Neretva* opens in the cinemas it will be a marvellous history lesson for all of us young people who, luckily, did not experience the horror of the war. I believe that this will satisfy the young girl from Kragujevac who wrote… in the Kragujevac museum: I have come to see the place where my Mom and Dad died, but apart from a bridge and some bushes around it I have not found anything (no. 418, p. 4).

Because Josip Broz was an avid film fan, who was fully aware of its power as a means of propaganda, there was lavish spending on the making of filmed stories about the war, sufficient to hire world's most famous actors, such as Richard Burton who plays the role of Tito in the film *Sutjeska*. The Yugoslav ideologists have very early recognized the potential of the film in invigorating the dialogue with the revolutionary past, and have replaced the authority of historiography with a powerful effect of *historiophoty*.[17] However, there has been no research into the dynamics of the relationship between the Yugoslav media, particularly partisan films, and the social memory of the Second World War in individual republics at a particular time.[18]

The dispersion of power in late socialism, the coming of age of generations with no first-hand memory of the Second World War as well as awareness of the significance of the Yugoslav film for world propaganda all resulted in finding more artistically demanding and more media--conscious ways of attracting audiences. The change in the poetics of war films and especially TV series in order to satisfy the sensibility and interests of the new generation is best described in this writing of a film critic from the 1970s:

> Films dealing with the revolution had to adapt to the sensibility of the new audience. This is the period of the coming of age of the first generations of youth who no longer remember the war. (…) At the same time, it should be kept in mind that this is the period when our country started opening up to the cultural values of the West more than before. (…) There appeared films in which the techniques of the western and the thriller were used. (…) there appeared ever more numerous attempts to achieve commercial success by making co-productions with foreign partners (Ranković 1977:65).

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[17] The term *historiophoty* is defined by Hayden White as "the representation of history and our thought about it in visual images and filmic discourse" (quoted according to Burke 2001:160).

[18] This is the most complex issue of media theory in general – "since direct effects of the media cannot be accurately determined, social psychologists are satisfied with several usual, but undoubtedly useful generalisations" (Inglis 1997:136).

Certain scenes from the films *Deveti krug* (The Ninth Circle, 1960), *Kozara* (1961), *Bitka na Neretvi* (The Battle of Neretva, 1969), *Sutjeska* (1973), *Okupacija u 26 slika* (Occupation in 26 pictures, 1978) and the TV series *Kapelski kresovi* (The Fires of Kapela, 1975) and *Salaš u malom ritu* (A farm in the Marshland, 1976) were more than impressive visual pictures and more than images of a time. They were autonomous imaginative worlds subject to irony and criticism, but with an undeniable artistic suggestiveness. This is confirmed by quite frequent broadcasting of these films on Croatian private TV stations during the 1990s, and by numerous nostalgic reflections on the popular characters and episodes from the "golden series" in postings of Internet users, especially those who were forced to leave the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Two theoreticians of the television text, Horace Newcomb and Paul M. Hirsch (2002) point out that television should be understood as an important cultural forum, a place of discussion and not indoctrination, a medium of preserving contradiction and not coherence. In contrast to the prevailing opinion that television "imposes ever-lower levels of political and social discourse on us all", as recently expressed by Pierre Bourdieu (1998), Newcomb and Hirsch claim that television contributes to the diversity of opinions, that it resolves our deepest dilemmas and that it supports, questions and transforms our traditionalist views. I believe that numerous routine productions of partisan films and TV series were not directed only at indoctrination and standardising imagery and prejudice about a time, but they also pointed to the existence of alternative and marginal historical subjects.[19] An example of such sensibility for the atypical female war destinies which did not find their place in the official historiography or in memoirs is offered by one of the first TV war series "Maria" (1969) by Stipe Delić.[20]

Taking into consideration that the partisan myth was a counterbalance to the increasing stratification of the Yugoslav society, the beginnings of ethnic resentment and unfulfilled expectations of its citizens, it was understandable that the positive aspects of war memories were constantly revived. It should be pointed out that the 1960s were a time of commodification of cultural goods – and memory culture was not exempt – the period of the first wave of mass tourism, when the historical enemy has turned into welcome tourists-clients. Therefore it is understandable that the monument complexes offered artists' views rather than historiographic

[19] In the commentary to the film *Kad čuješ zvona* (When you Hear Church Bells, 1969) by Antun Vrdoljak it is pointed out that the film features "somber characters of fighters and the harsh and grim atmosphere destroy many romantic visions of the partisan revolutionary war for liberation" (*Arena*, 1969, no. 429, p. 20-21). It is interesting that in this issue of *Arena* the film is retold in the form of a comic – by isolating key sequences and accompanying them with the story – just like the content of the popular TV series *Bonny and Clyde* (1967) had been presented several issues before.

[20] The first war TV series *Sumorna jesen* (A Somber Autumn, 1969) was directed by Zvonimir Bajsić, and it was filmed according to Ivan Šibl's acclaimed memoir.

facts, an imaginary of heroism rather than military charts, recreational spots with skiing slopes, car rallies and cinemas rather than places of meditation and reverence for the spirits of the past. But the ideologically directed work of preserving the supranational revolutionary memory in multiethnic society must not be seen as a harmonious and consensual process congruent with the logic of reception in the electronic era. As ethnologist are very well aware, death rituals, burials and commemorations are the most persistent ritual practices (with variable cultural meanings) since they serve to sanctify the territorial boundaries of a community and to reconfigure the communities people participate in. Ideas about ancestry and glorious forefathers at a time of confronted nationalisms and system transformation provide social actors with "material for symbolizing a new (cosmic) order" and with ways of imagining "a return to an ostensibly more authentic national history" (Verdery 1999:125). The crucial moment of the Yugoslav tragic story of having to repeat the war trauma was the moment when the suitability of World War II history to create popular products of mass culture gave way to an intellectual and "historiographic" interest for the ethnic variants of the "Balkan Holocaust" to the minutest detail.[21]

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[21] The discourse of the Croatian Holocaust in the last 15 years has been represented using a suggestive imaginary of the national passion as a continuity of "the ways of the Cross". This is best summed up by father Nikola Roščić at the commemoration in Bleiburg on May 13, 2002, when he recited his poem *Svi naši križevi* (All the Crosses We Bear): "Our Bleiburg and our/Jasenovac cross are still burning,/The crosses of all our ways of the Cross are still burning,/The crosses of our fatal abyss of suffering are still burning,/ Our one hundred year cross and our modern cross are still burning,/Still and despite everything our Homeland War cross is still burning."

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POLITIKA PAMĆENJA U HRVATSKOJ SOCIJALISTIČKOJ KULTURI: NEKA ZAPAŽANJA

SAŽETAK

Autorica preispituje ključnu ulogu masovnih medija i popularne kulture u promjeni memorijskih praksi u socijalističkoj kulturi sjećanja na Drugi svjetski rat. Rad ne nudi odgovor već smjernice za razumijevanje mjesta popularne jugoslavenske kulture kao središnjeg mjesta perpetuacije ideoloških obrazaca povijesnog pamćenja. Ne samo zbog disperzije moći u razdoblju zrelog socijalizma već i zbog stasanja naraštaja bez neposrednog pamćenja na Drugi svjetski rat, iznalaze se artistički zahtjevniji i medijski osviješteniji načini privlačenja publike. Na drugoj strani, literarne i historiografske žanrove elitne kulture autorica razumije kao "agente" ideološke homogenizacije i kulturne regresije koja je svoj vrhunac dosegla potkraj 1980-tih, promovirajući politiku pamćenja prema modelu "balkanskog holokausta".

Ključne riječi: socijalistička kultura pamćenja, popularna kultura, Drugi svjetski rat, Hrvatska